

(1)

*Account of a Roman Building and Camp lately
discovered at Buxton, in the County of Derby. In
a Letter from Major Rooke to the Bishop of Carlisle,
V. P.*

Read at the SOCIETY of ANTIQUARIES, March 6, 1788.

MY LORD,

Woodhouse, Feb. 23, 1788.

I take the liberty of sending your lordship a short account of a little Roman building, the foundation of which I discovered last September at Buxton; with a plan and description of a Roman Camp. I am, very sincerely,

Your Lordship's

most affectionate,

and obliged, humble servant,

H. R O O K E.

On the hill facing the Crescent little banks of earth have been thrown up; but as no regular form can now be made out, it is impossible to say for what purpose they were intended. See the plan, Pl. vi. No. 1. In the centre at (a) was an oblong tumulus inclosed with a ditch and vallum; the ditch 3 yards wide; the vallum was not of equal height in every part. On opening

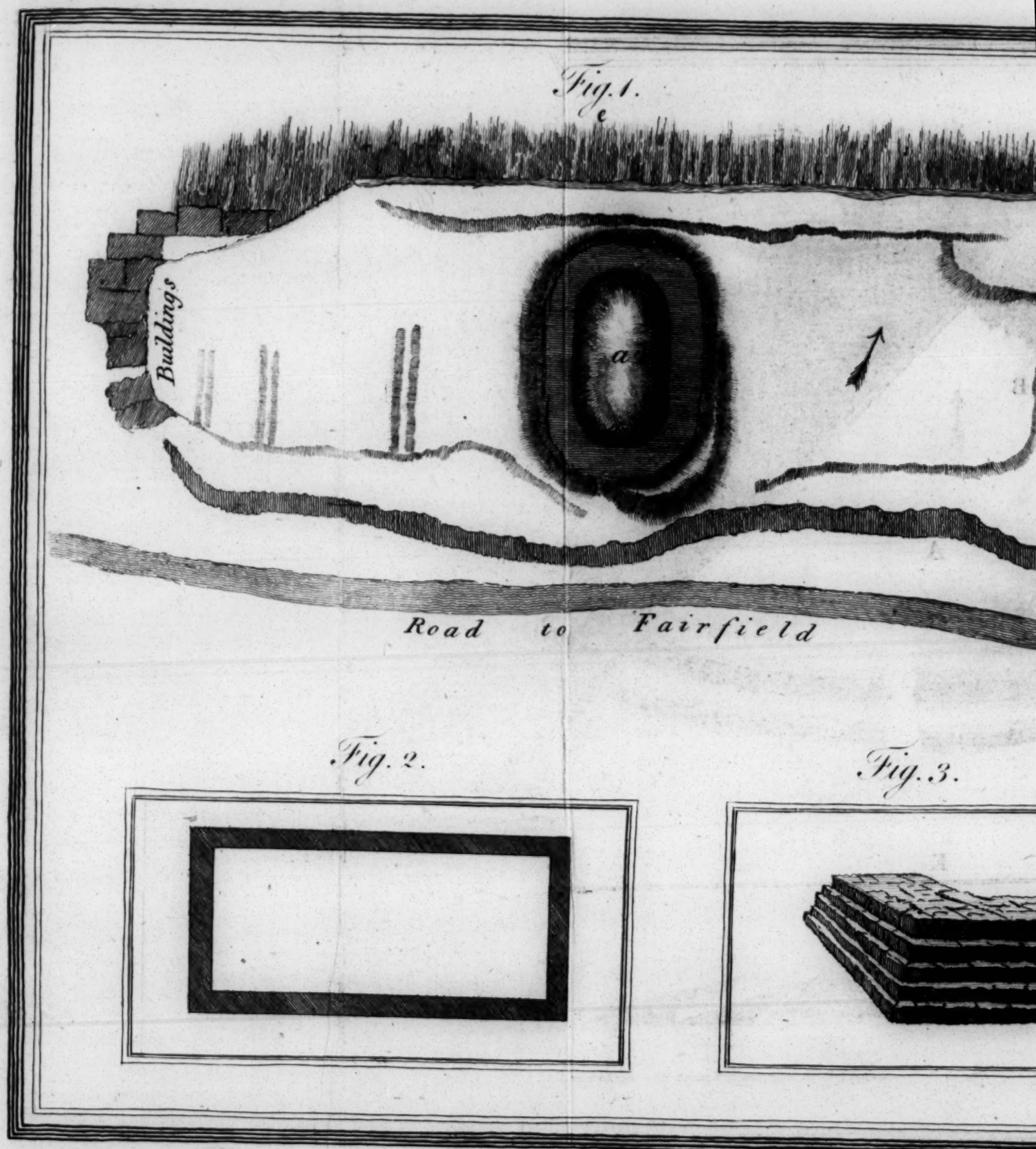
A

this

this tumulus at the top, we found one foot of earth, which covered a body of stiff blue clay of about four feet, and which appeared to have been rammed in. Close to the ditch we discovered a strong wall made without mortar, inclosing an oblong square 46 feet by 22 feet 6 inches. See plan, N° 2. The construction of this wall is similar to that of the large room, or kitchen, in the *villa urbana* near Mansfield Woodhouse. From the foundation, on the outside only, were four off-sets; the inside of the wall was rough and irregular; which are proofs of its having been built against the above mentioned body of clay. See the construction of the wall N° 3. The superstructure seems to have been built with large well-dressed stones; as those now appear to be which are above the off-sets. Nothing was found in clearing out the clay but two or three nails, a fragment of a *patera*, and a piece of a tile with the sides raised, exactly of the same kind as those found in the Roman villa here.

If I might venture to give my opinion of this building, I should imagine from its shape and situation, it might have been a temple; probably dedicated to Apollo; one of whose attributes was healing. It is very natural to suppose, after the Romans had found the salutary effects of the warm spring, (which they held sacred) that they would erect a temple to some presiding deity. No situation could be better chosen for that purpose. The view is very extensive, and the hill, from this temple, slopes down at (e) about four score yards, in a direct line to St. Ann's well; near to which were found, a few years ago, the pavement of a Roman Bath, and other antiquities. The Rev. Mr. Pegge, in his perambulation of the lesser Roman roads in the county of Derby, called the Bath way [a], traces

[a] Roman roads through the Coritani, p. 10.



H. Rooke del.

Plan of some Roman works near Burton

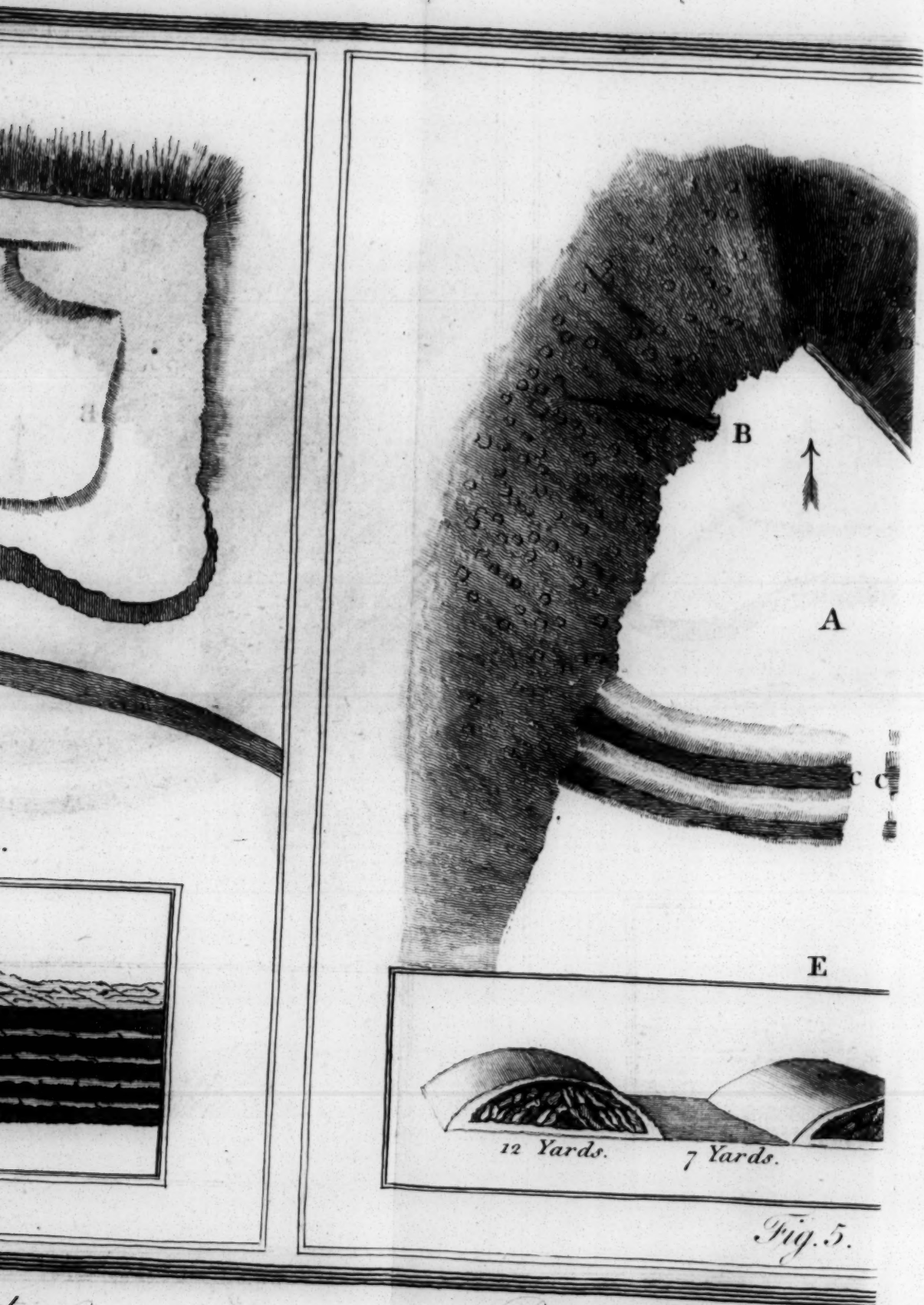
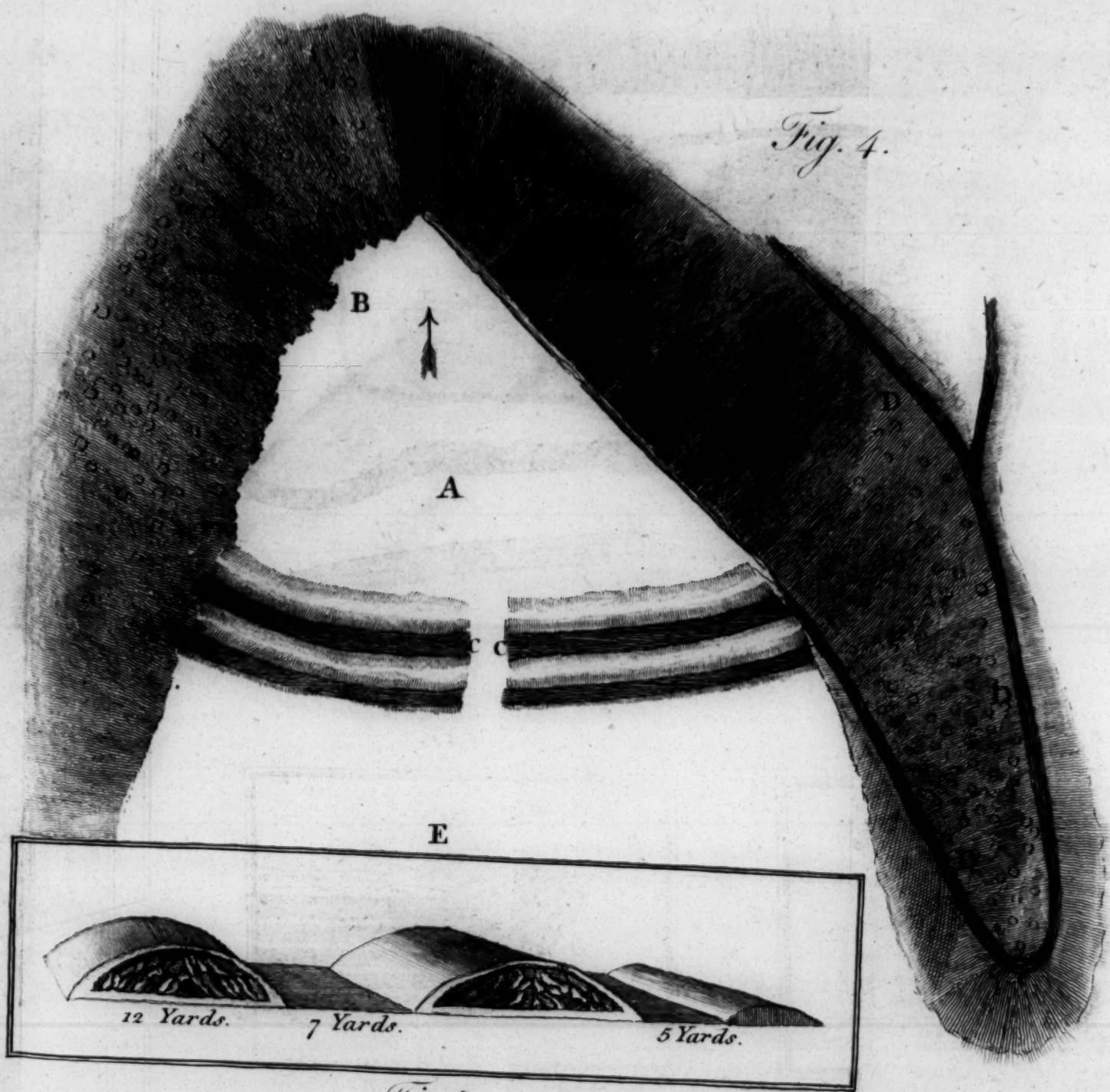


Fig. 5.

Plan of a Roma.



Plan of a Roman Camp near Buxton.

Baillie sc.

one to Buxton from Brough, which was undoubtedly a Roman station, and where antiquities have been found. He mentions his having seen a rude bust of Apollo, and of another deity, in stone, that had been found in the fields there. This Roman road comes by Fairfield to Buxton, where it ends; and I was told by some old men there, that it came to the hill above mentioned, and there finished. Whilst the Romans frequented these baths, it is natural to suppose that they would take possession of the heights and strong posts in the neighbourhood. Accordingly we find an exploratory camp on a high moor, called *Combes Moss*, about four miles from Buxton; which is seen from the hill where the temple stood. As this Roman work (which is called *Castle dikes* [b]) has never, I believe, hitherto, been taken notice of, I have given a plan of it at (A). Pl. VI. fig. 4. The South side, which is on a level with the moor, is strongly secured by a double ditch and *vallum*: here the entrance appears to have been. The East and West sides are inaccessible from a rocky declivity, which on the West side goes down to a brook from whence the camp was supplied with water, as appears by a passage cut through some rocks at (B). Length of the South end 163 yards. The East side, where there is now a well, is about 162 yards; width of the inner ditch (C) 7 yards; and of the outward ditch 5 yards. (D) is a hollow way which goes winding to the camp with an easy ascent. The construction of the *vallum* (see the section E. fig. 5.) is different from any I have ever seen; being formed of long stones placed diagonally, so as to press inward towards the centre, and then covered with earth: the base of the *vallum* is 12 yards.

[b] Doctor Stukeley mentions a Roman Camp called *Castle dikes* in Northamptonshire. *Itinerarium Curiosum*, l. p. 114.

I had not time to examine the roads near this post, but that from Buxton to the camp is through Fairfield; where, most probably, the Roman road from the camp joined that to Brough.

I must here beg leave to acknowledge my obligations to Mr. Heaton, not only for his information of these Roman works near the Crescent, but for his politeness in reserving them for my inspection; the ground being intended to be planted and laid out in walks to compleat those elegant improvements, of public utility, carrying on by his Grace the Duke of Devonshire.



